5: Crowder J-5 (1955-1961) 1962
MS37 Senegal MS37
Wolof MS30

of inter-ethnic marriages in the towns is indicative of a major social change and a reflection of the effects of an assimilationist policy on the Senegalese.

Though many communities in Dakar are based on ethnic and family ties, particularly amongst the immigrant Toucouleurs from the Vallée du Fleuve, Dakar is on the whole a heterogeneous city. Mercier has observed that inter-ethnic habitation is particularly frequent among young bachelors, who often club together to hire a room. This is still relatively rare in Africa except amongst educated élites. But in Senegal many young men resent being asked the question whether they are Wolof or Serer, answering only to the name Senegalese. As far as friendship outside the ethnic group and in particular living with someone from another tribe is concerned, one great advantage is the existence of a common cuisine for Wolof, Serer, Toucouleur and Lebou. There is even a national dish known as *riz sénégalais*, known further down the coast as Jollof rice. This means that not only can friends share the same plate, but a man is not frustrated in his desire to marry outside his ethnic group by fear of a foreign cuisine.

Another important factor in the breakdown of tribal barriers has been the urbanisation of Senegal. Over 25 per cent of the population live in towns, the bulk in Dakar, Rufisque and St. Louis and Kaolack. This represents a higher rate of urbanisation than in any other West African territory except the Western Region of Nigeria, where, it must be pointed out, urbanisation was intense long before the arrival of the Europeans and therefore does not owe its origin to colonisation as it does in Senegal. It is difficult in the present stage of research to measure the results of the inter-mixing of races in urban agglomerations. But in an environment whose *raison d'être* is completely different from that of the tribal village, the individual is subjected to so many pressures that his ethnic individuality has to be extremely strong for him not to assimilate both ideas and customs from his neighbours and above all from the

[8]

369
581

The native of the large cities of Senegal, one from Saint-Louis in particular, is evolving, but his expenses for ceremonies of "pleasure," baptism and especially marriage, are evolving also, and unhappily much more rapidly. The young man looks for a way to be able to manage this vertiginous soaring of expenses; he struggles, if not to stop it, to curb it at least. Some associations have been formed in order to agree on a fixed sum which one [9] [Fig. 6 appears here] [10] is not to exceed, as for the expenses of marriage. They scarcely seem to give the anticipated result, their members not facing up to the strength of character required for the attacks, with innovation as the object. Nevertheless, one should cite the nearly general agreement of the members on the precept to "defy the tempest" and to pay no attention to the desires of their parents, parents-in-law, and spouses for having pompous nuptials. Those among them who do not feel capable of restraining their vanity by acting "poverty-stricken" avail themselves of the facilities that they have for changing posts and contracting bush marriages (1). Most of them

[589]

1. For the men and women of Saint-Louis, any woman who does not live in Saint-Louis or has no ancestors in this city is from the bush and hence is of mundane breeding and an inadequate housekeeper.

remain single.

What is the origin of these high expenses? We are going to look for it in the local customs, without any expectation of finding it in former times or in the laws of the Koran, which we have merely submitted to, and which in any case we are trying to adapt to our fancy. What are the phases of marriage? What expenses does each one require? We shall give them specifically as we consider the single case of a man from Saint-Louis. Saint-Louis is the "center of good taste" for the colony and serves as the model for it. Finally, do these exaggerated expenses have

/22 cont./ 369*
itself, its variable importance depending on religions, ethnic [595]
groups, socio-occupational categories.

B. -- The numerical importance of the groups of rela- 369*
tives making up a single household is very variable. We have 592
defined the household /maisonnée/: the assemblage of persons [104]
living in a single house or a single group of houses, and putting
together at least a part of their resources.

1. Some remarks are necessary here in order to place conveniently the data gathered.

/23/ Certain households are composed of groups of persons having no ties of kinship between them -- in extreme cases, not even of ethnic relationship. In particular this is the [589]
case for groups of bachelors who rent a room with common funds, a case that is quite frequent among the seasonal workers, but this is a category that has only briefly been studied up to now. The investigation by questionnaires is practically limited [125]
to the permanent population. The elements relating to the composition of the household thus concern kinship groups almost exclusively. We obtain an approximation adequate for our purpose.

There are some facts which we shall be able to take into account only in the statement of qualitative data. On the one hand, a certain number of households are tied by kinship or by marriage with immediately neighboring households. Even though there is no life in common for the whole of the family group, its different parts continue to have constant relations. This aspect will be brought out in the last part of our work. On the other hand, the restricted polygamous family, in a certain [595]
number of cases, is not assembled in one and the same place; each wife, with her children, forms the nucleus of a household, which other members of the kinship group eventually come to join; the head of the family passes from one household to another (1)

1. This fact is less marked, however, than in a town like Saint-Louis.

/31 cont./ a matter of a de facto matrilocal, non-institutionalized marriage. 369x 592 [591] [596]

do not form separate households. The segmentation of these groups occurs constantly -- it poses a question of available space -- but its importance is sometimes tempered by the maintenance of the neighborhood situation. The aged father and mother are often dependent, and the role of the de facto head of the family has partially been transferred to the eldest son.

/32/ d) Kinship by marriage is likewise a factor of grouping. One finds most frequently the collaterals of the wife, more rarely her relatives on ascending generations. One is reminded in part of the preceding case (1).

1. See preceding note.

e) One finds finally, living with the restricted family, distant relatives or "friends" who, in the majority of cases, are at least tied to this family by an ethnic relationship. But these much looser relationships account chiefly for the formation of bachelor groups. [589]

2. Two typical cases of variations in time will be given by way of illustration. The first example is that of a specialized worker's family, the second that of a family of a subordinate employee. The wages of the family heads in the chosen cases are much the same.

a) This family is of Toucouleur origin, but, after a series of marriages, is closely tied to Wolof groups. The nucleus of the restricted family consists of the husband, his wife, and her three children. The mother of the family head, a widow, lives with her son permanently. The following changes in the composition of the household were observed from August 1953 to May 1954:

-- August: a guest was lodged for three weeks, in the capacity of both a distant relative and a marabout;

/36 cont./

divided into several types by their composition: 369x 621 571

-- Compounds composed of a single family group: extended kinship group based on the nephew-uterine uncle relationship (B), restricted family (E);

-- Compounds composed of restricted family groups, but having between them ties of distant collateral kinship (J);

--Compounds composed of restricted or extended family groups tied only by the ethnic relationship (A and N);

-- Compounds grouping restricted families from different ethnic groups (F, G);

-- Compounds grouping restricted families and isolated persons, all of the same ethnic group (L);

-- Compounds grouping restricted families and isolated persons, and ethnically varied (C, D, K, M).

The compounds of the first two types will not detain us; family solidarity plays a major role there. In the others, the situation is extremely variable. Frequent relationships exist everywhere on the level of the children (play groups), less frequently on the level of women, still less frequently on the level of men. Let us consider essentially the relationships which are not sustained by the ethnic community.

a) The bachelors, except when they are of the same ethnic group as some of the families of the compound (1 case, in compound D), participate little in the life of the compound; most eat outside and only spend the night at home. Mutual aid does little for them; most said that they had recourse, in case of sickness, to the aid of friends -- almost always of the same ethnic group -- on the outside. In one single case (compound K), the bachelors -- of the same ethnic group, moreover -- form a group eating together, going out together, etc.; the cooking is done for them by an old woman -- also of the same ethnic group -- a widow who lives with her children. [589] •

b) Within the compound the ethnic disparity among the families does not exclude some minimal forms of mutual aid (loans of utensils, small purchases, care of children, etc.) [563]